



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE
Library Assistants' Association.

Vol. 2.

NOVEMBER, 1900.

No. 14.

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A FEW TESTIMONIALS.

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"LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION, ARCHITECTURE, FITTINGS, AND FURNITURE."
BY F. J. BURGOWNE. 1897.

"The Cotgreave Indicator is that in use in the majority of the British Free Libraries."

"THE FREE LIBRARY: ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION."
BY J. J. OGLE. 1897.

"The Recording Indicator is almost certainly the invention of Mr. A. Cotgreave (Public Libraries, West Ham, London, E.), and is that most largely used."[†]

"THE SCOTSMAN."

"All the London Free Public Libraries which use indicators, except one, have adopted the Cotgreave System, which has been found to work well."[†]

N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

* As a matter of fact it will be found in about nine-tenths of the Libraries using Indicators. Over 300 Institutions are now using it.

† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

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"DUBLIN REVIEW,"

"The Editor of the 'DUBLIN REVIEW' (Canon Moyes), desires me to thank you for the specimen of the 'Contents-Subject Index,' and to say that he has formed a high opinion of it, in fact he has already found it useful."

T. W. HUNTER, Librarian, Archbishop's House, Westminster.

Full particulars of the above and also of other Library Aids sent upon application to the

LIBRARY AIDS CO.,

166a, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E.



The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

No. 35.

NOVEMBER, 1900.

Published Monthly.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895.

SIXTH SESSION.

YEAR 1900-1901.

Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements may be expected.

NOVEMBER MEETING.

The second meeting of the session will be held at 8 p.m. on November 28th at the West Ham Central Public Library, Stratford, E., by the kind invitation of Mr. Cotgreave, the librarian. After the transaction of business, as shown below, the L.A.A. Cotgreave 1900 Prize Essay—"How Best to Extend the Usefulness of the L.A.A."—by Mr. B. L. Dyer, now Librarian of Kimberley Public Library, will be read, in the absence of the essayist, by Mr. W. G. Chambers, the Vice-Chairman. There is reason to believe that the contents of the essay are of particular interest to the Association at this juncture, and it is expected that the discussion ensuing will have valuable practical results. Members and friends are heartily invited, and it is hoped that the meeting may rival the one last held at West Ham. Trains to Maryland Point Station, G.E. Railway.

THIRD ANNUAL DINNER.

The L.A.A. Dinner will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on Wednesday, November 21st, at 6.30 p.m. Applications for tickets (3s. 6d. each) should be made before November 14th to Mr. G. E. Roebuck, St. George-in-the-East Public Library, 236, Cable Street, E., who will also be glad to receive offers of musical help.

OCTOBER MEETING.

A meeting was held at St. Bride Foundation Institute, Bride Lane, on October 17th, Mr. C. J. Drummond, F.S.S., in the chair, when Mr. W. B. Thorne read a paper on "William Blades: the Man and his Library." There was a good attendance, and a number of books from the library under consideration

were displayed upon the table, including a chained copy of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," 1576, a first edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost," a copy of the *Cologne Chronicle*, containing the first account of the invention of printing, several manuscript "Books of Hours" on vellum of the fifteenth century, and a copy, in the original covers, of Moxon's "Mechanick Exercises," 1683.

Hearty votes of thanks were accorded to Mr. Thorne for his valuable paper, to the Chairman for presiding over the meeting, and to the Governors for their kindness in placing a room at the disposal of the Association.

In replying, Mr. Drummond said that William Blades was a man who entered into his undertakings with such force and earnestness, as even at times to go out of his way to emphasize and make public views which seemed almost heresy from a man in his position. He considered that the library was used to an extent much too limited. It had been hoped that men in the trade would have resorted to it for the sake of their own progress in much larger numbers.

PRESENTATION TO MR. F. MEADEN ROBERTS.

Another pleasant feature of the meeting was the presentation to Mr. F. Meaden Roberts, by Mr. Chambers, the Vice-Chairman, of a silver inkstand, subscribed for by members of the L.A.A. on the occasion of his marriage, as a token of their appreciation of his services as Hon. Secretary and Chairman prior to his appointment as Librarian of St. George-in-the-East.

THE REVISION OF THE RULES.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

In accordance with a resolution of the last annual meeting of the Library Assistants' Association, the Committee have considered the Rules of the Association, and a resolution will be moved at a Special General Meeting of this Association to be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, November 28th, at West Ham Public Library, with the object of superseding the existing Rules (printed with the June, 1900, number of this Journal), and the "Memorandum as to Branches," dated 16th November, 1898, (printed with the July, 1900, number of this Journal, page 105), by a revised form of the same, as set out below.

1. NAME.—The Association shall be called "THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION."

2. OBJECTS.—Its objects shall be to promote the social, intellectual, and professional interests of its members, by meetings of a social character, by discussions, and in such other ways as may be suggested from time to time.

3. MEMBERS.—(A) All persons engaged in library adminis-

tration, other than chief librarians, shall be eligible for election. Applications shall be made in writing to the Hon. Secretary, and shall be considered at the next meeting of the Committee. (B) When a member is raised to the status of chief librarian, or leaves the profession, such person shall cease to be a member six months afterwards. (c) The Committee shall have power to elect honorary members, such members not having the right of voting. (D) The Association at any ordinary meeting of not less than twenty members shall have power to expel any member by a vote of two-thirds of those present. Such member shall have the right of appeal to the Annual General Meeting.

4. SUBSCRIPTION.—(A) The Annual Subscription shall be 5s. for Senior, and 2s. 6d. for Junior Assistants, payable in advance on October 1st. (B) Members being 6 months in arrear with their subscriptions shall cease to belong to the Association.

5. OFFICERS.—(A) The Officers of the Association shall consist of Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and a Committee of ten London and ten non-London members, who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. (B) In the event of any of these offices falling vacant, the vacancy shall be filled at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Association.

6. MEETINGS.—(A) There shall be an Annual Meeting of which due notice shall be given. (B) Ordinary meetings shall be held monthly from October to May at such times and places as shall be decided by the Committee. (c) Special General Meetings shall be called on the requisition of twenty members of the Association, such meeting to be held within six weeks from the date of receipt of such requisition by the Hon. Secretary.

7. PROCEDURE.—(A) Amendments to these rules shall only be considered at the Annual Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting convened for that purpose.

8. BRANCHES.—Application for the formation of a branch shall be made in writing to the L.A.A. Committee, by not less than 10 members in the proposed district.

Each branch shall be bound by the Rules of the Association, but may formulate special rules for its local government, providing the same are confirmed by the Committee of the L.A.A. All proposed local rules must be deposited with the Hon. Secretary of the Branches' Sub-Committee for approval. Members of a branch shall pay their subscriptions to the treasurer of the branch, who shall remit to the treasurer of the L.A.A. for every Senior Member 3/6, and for every Junior Member 2/-, to cover the cost of the official publications.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

OCTOBER MEETINGS.

The monthly meeting of the members of the North-Western Branch was held in the Athenæum, Princess Street, Manchester, on Wednesday, October 17th, there being a good attendance to hear Mr. Dickens read a paper on the "Organisation and Administration of a Public Library," which dealt with many interesting phases of the librarian's duties, the assumption being that the librarian was entering upon the duties in a new library, the building being completed and awaiting the process of furnishing and equipment.

A discussion on the paper followed, after which Mr. Dickens was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for the manner in which he had treated his subject.

VISIT TO RYLAND'S LIBRARY.

On the invitation of Mr. Henry Guppy the North-Western Branch paid a visit to the John Rylands Library on Tuesday evening, October 23rd.

Prior to inspecting the building and the treasures which it contains. The visitors assembled in the conference room, when Mr. Guppy devoted some time to a talk of professional interest. Proceeding to bid them welcome, he said he was not going to lecture them in any way, or inflict upon them an address on library matters, as all that could be said on that subject had been said over and over again in much better language than he had at his command; and there was little that was new in that direction upon which he could enlarge for their benefit. There were, however, one or two points which he would like to bring before them, as young librarians entering, or about to enter, the profession, which, if followed up in a proper spirit of appreciation, would prove of great benefit to them in after life.

It was often said that there was little or no scope in the library as a profession, but that, he could assure them, was an erroneous impression under which to labour, as there was plenty of scope for good men, if but little for the purely mechanical librarian.

We should strive to live our life not merely on the commonplace, every-day level, but rather on a higher plane than was demanded by the call of duty, and it was only by preparing and equipping ourselves by study that we could hope to attain that stage of perfection which marked the goal of the perfect librarian.

Reading was the only possible method by which the assistant could equip himself for a higher position in life; through it, we lived not only in the present, but in the past and also in the future. For the librarian who does not read there can be no

past, and if he think, or reason, or experiment, he must do so from his own small starting point, from his own small beginnings, with his own limited resources, and not as an inheritor of the cumulated treasure of generations.

Books were the vehicles of communication, linking the distant ages with the present day; from them we learned all that the noblest lives could teach by example and precept, and it was only by judicious selection that we are enabled to make the most of books and to acquire that knowledge which is the very marrow of our professional existence.

There were many assistants and others who continually raised the plea that they had no time for reading. He had no sympathy with such, as he held that everyone could make time; and if they only made up their minds to read, say, ten pages—or even five per day—to mark, learn, and inwardly digest what they had read, in the course of four or five years what a store of knowledge they would acquire—a store that would grow with the years until, if buttonholed or dragged into a discussion, they would be able to render a very good account of themselves against all-comers.

As he had remarked at the Summer School to the students, so he might say to them, the very fact of their attending such classes or meetings was sufficient to prove that they recognised the necessity for raising their status as a class and so providing that the librarian of the future would, by the fact of his better equipment, fill the position with credit to himself and honour to his profession.

Some there were who exclaimed: "Why all the studying and learning of foreign languages? I shall never require such knowledge, as my library is but a small one." Well, a small library might grow into a large one, and it was even possible for it to develop on special lines which would make it famous and of greater value to the literary world: and, consequently, the assistant who had been quietly preparing himself and keeping abreast of the times, would rise with the library. It was inevitable that the mechanical assistant would sink, while his more intelligent fellow rose over the shoulders of men who, if not slothful, were contented with the bare performance of their daily routine.

The librarian of even a small library should always keep ahead of his work, not just in line with it. Young assistants should be anxious to fit themselves for higher positions, remembering that it is impossible to stand still, for in all intellectual, as in all organic life, stagnation means retrogression and death.

He could go on speaking in this desultory manner all night, but as they were no doubt anxious to inspect the library, he

would pass on to a short account of its foundation; but before doing so he wished to say that if any of them cared to visit the library in their spare time with the idea of following out a special line of study, he would be only too pleased to aid them to the best of his ability and as far as the scope of the library permitted.

Passing on to describe the John Rylands Library, Mr. Guppy said he would like to correct an impression which had got abroad with regard to the Althorp collection. Many people were of opinion that it formed the nucleus of the John Rylands Library, but that was a mistaken idea; the fact being that the plans of the library were completed in 1890, and the building commenced two years before even the announcement was made of Earl Spencer's willingness to dispose of that most famous of all private collections—the Althorp Library.

Their history back to the time of the inception of the library only covered a period of about ten years, but by reason of the purchase of the Althorp Library he thought they were entitled to any historical associations which it possessed; thus, through it, they could carry their history back for nearly a century and a half, to the time when the first Earl Spencer founded the Althorp collection.

They were, as perhaps they all knew, particularly rich in early-printed books, but as they would be introduced to the "Early Printing Room" later, he would defer further description until then. One thing he might say with regard to the early printers was, that while many people were apt to think that their first attempts in printing must of necessity have been crude, it was a fact that for beauty of design and execution their workmanship had never been equalled. It has often been asked, "Why was this?" Might it not be explained, at least in part, by this fact, that those old printers were not merely printers but men of culture? They no doubt worked as much through love of their craft as for pecuniary gain.

After sketching the growth of the Althorp collection, Mr. Guppy proceeded to show the visitors round the library, spending considerable time in showing the specimens of early-printed books (prior to 1501) which make this library world famous. Space will not permit of further details. Needless to say everything shown was of absorbing interest, and a very profitable evening came all too quickly to a close, not however before the best thanks of the visitors—moved by Mr. Swann and seconded by Mr. Gordon—had been accorded to Mr. Guppy, who expressed a desire to meet them on another occasion.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

Will be held in the Free Library, Hulme Town Hall, Street-

ford Road, on Wednesday, November 21st, at 8 p.m., when the Librarian, Mr. R. Irwin, will read a paper on "Byron: a Manchester Worthy, an appreciation."

Nominations for Committee, 1901, bringing no new candidates forward, the present Committee will be declared re-elected provided no resignations are tendered prior to the November Meeting.

Special Notice.—Members are reminded that any notice of motion which it is desired to bring before the General Meeting in December must be in the Secretary's hands before December 9th.

WILLIAM BLADES: THE MAN AND HIS LIBRARY.

By W. B. THORNE.

Biographical notices of such men as William Blades, who did so much for the science of bibliography, and who was so much in sympathy with the public library movement, are always welcome to persons who are privately or professionally interested in these subjects. There is a good deal of printed matter in existence relating to Blades, and while I shall have little to say that is actually new, I have gathered from various sources facts and anecdotes about him, and have endeavoured to make a reliable and, I trust, not uninteresting paper.

William Blades was born on December 5th, 1824, at Clapham, Surrey. He received his education at the Clapham Grammar School, one of his schoolmates being Sir George Grove, who compiled the "Dictionary of Music and Musicians." He left school at the age of sixteen, which assuredly allowed him but a very short time to lay the foundation on which to erect the tower of learning and knowledge he afterwards became. Straight from school he entered the office of his father, Joseph Blades, a well-known printer, in Abchurch Lane, E.C. Here he thoroughly learned the art of printing, both practical and artistic. Beginning thus at the bottom of the ladder, he was able to understand fully the wants and feelings of his father's *employés*, and he afterwards, as head of the firm, became a sympathetic and indulgent employer. He took a keen interest in the Trade Societies, and whilst upholding with a firm hand what he considered the rights of the masters, was always ready to receive deputations, and if he could benefit his men by any reasonable means, did so with promptitude and pleasure.

It was during his apprenticeship that he commenced buying books relating to his profession. A prominent trade paper, in an obituary notice of Blades, says when he had got together about

a couple of dozen of books, he thought he possessed a tolerably large "library" of works on typography. The paper rather sarcastically goes on to say that many printers seem now to be in a similar state of mind. Of course, he soon found that this was only a drop in the ocean. Year after year found him still making additions, all of them important, many of them extensive and costly.

In the early years of his career as a printer, however, he does not seem to have delved very deeply into the history of the typographical art. It was not until he was thirty-four years of age that he made his first literary effort. This was in 1858, when he wrote an introductory notice to a reprint of Caxton's "Governayle of Helthe." His special qualification for the task was that he had already begun his investigation of the typography of the first English press which was to result in his work on Caxton. In 1861 the first volume of his *magnum opus*, "The Biography and Typography of William Caxton," appeared. Two years later a second volume was published. The way he set about compiling this masterpiece was a lesson and an example for any historian. By deep and careful study he found that all the existing works relating to Caxton—Lewis, Ames, Dibdin, and Aldys—were quite unreliable and for the most part founded on conjecture and subtle reasoning. Therefore he shut them all up and assumed that neither he nor anyone knew anything at all about William Caxton. Quoting from Talbot Baines Reed's memoir:—"From this clear standpoint he began first to study the life and then the books of the mercer-printer. He groped through the City of London records till he established a clear connection between the apprentice of Robert Large and the merchant adventurer at the Court of Burgundy. Then, step by step, he traced the literary *protégé* of the Duchess to Bruges, and into the printing office of Colard Mansion. As he himself confessed, it was no easy task. Often he had to go back on his steps, and often difficulties in the way seemed to forbid all further progress. But the ground cleared as he went on, and when once he had traced his hero to Westminster, the chief biographical difficulties were over." There still remained the more important study of Caxton's books. Here, more than ever, he resolved to take nothing at second-hand. Blades inspected no fewer than 450 Caxtons in different libraries, collating, comparing, and classifying them as he went on. He went not by titles or colophons, but by the types, and as a result a new epoch in bibliography was marked. Alphabets in each class of letter were laboriously picked out and reproduced in facsimile, so that the student is able to study Caxton's works not only as they appeared ready printed, but letter by letter, as they were in the case before

composition. It was, indeed, a wonderful work.

In 1877 the great Caxton Celebration was organised at South Kensington. From the first, Blades threw himself heart and soul into the movement. He superintended and worked at the arrangement of large miscellaneous collections of books, specimens, autographs, portraits, medals, and curiosities to which he himself contributed the lion's share. He also wrote the prefatory note on Caxton for the official catalogue. It was at this time that Talbot Baines Reed first met him, and this is how he describes it: "The man of letters was in his shirt sleeves busy with the unpacking of a box of Caxtons. He was the guiding spirit of the scene. While others despaired of being up to time, he kept his head and worked hard. While others differed and argued, he was serene and genial. It was impossible in his presence to stand idle, or doubt for a moment the success of the undertaking."

The formation of the Literary Association in 1877 was another event which commanded Mr. Blades' sympathy. He was a member of the first Council, and attended many meetings as well as the yearly Conferences held in different parts of the country. On these occasions he made the most of the opportunity, and managed to see all that was to be seen in the way of early-printed books and libraries in the locality. In 1881 he published a very popular little book called "The Enemies of Books." Apropos of this, it may be mentioned that he took considerable interest in that much-talked of, but rarely seen insect—the bookworm. He usually had one or two specimens about, and even attempted to rear them, but was unsuccessful. He confessed that this was one of the failures of his life.

In 1884 he got into a controversy with Herr Goebel, of Stuttgart. Goebel had published a book on the invention of the steam printing press, in which he claimed as its inventor a fellow-countryman named Koenig. Mr. Blades reviewed the book at some length in the "Printers' Register," establishing a claim for an Englishman named Nicholson as the real inventor. After a lapse of nearly two years Goebel replied to the review, in the same journal. Blades, in a rejoinder, says this reply was "a series of personal attacks, sometimes spiteful, mostly unfortunate, and always trivial." He concluded by saying: "In this way for four months has Herr Goebel made his fiery attacks upon me, with this result: some brushwood and a few out-buildings have been burnt, but the citadel remains untouched." Blades ever regretted this somewhat unfortunate occurrence, as he lost a very old friend in Herr Goebel.

It may prove interesting to quote here a letter from Blades

to T. B. Reed, which is very characteristic of the man, and a delightful specimen of a friendly letter :

" Sutton,

" *November 23rd, 1886.*

" MY DEAR MR. REED,

" It is indeed a long time since we had a typographical chat, and there is nothing I should so much enjoy, for year by year I grow more and more into 'old fogeyism,' and although delighted to see old friends, especially those of the arte and crafte, my inclinations are very averse from leaving my home, except now and then in summer-time. Don't think me unfriendly if I beg you to excuse me. Did I go out anywhere, no place would please me better than your congenial house and society; but, in truth, I'm better at home.

" Now, in the case of a young fellow like you, just entering his prime, it is quite another affair. Suppose, then, we reverse the picture. Will you gratify the wife and me by paying us a visit? We have plenty of sleeping accommodation and a hearty welcome to offer you, the wife, and even baby, and you can choose your own day. There, what say you? The 4.35 from London Bridge is a good one, and would afford us nearly two hours before dinner for the indulgence of our 'mania,' though I hardly think I've anything new to show you, for you already have a 'Twyn,' which (thanks to you) I secured last week. Thursday in next week would do well, if it will suit you. With kindest regards to your wife, believe me,

" Very sincerely yours,

" WILLIAM BLADES."

A deep spirit of sincere friendship breathes through the words of this letter, and one can envy Mr. Reed the good time he must have had did he accept the invitation.

Another friendship formed by Blades was with Henry Bradshaw, the Cambridge University librarian. Two great hearts and two great minds here found a congenial companionship. Mr. Prothero, in his life of Bradshaw, places on record a meeting of the two bibliographers. It is worth repeating: " In September, 1860, Mr. Blades paid a visit to Cambridge, taking with him the first two sheets of his 'Caxton' in type, and the rest in manuscript. It was a fine warm afternoon, and after dinner they went down, as Bradshaw was fond of doing, into the college garden; a bottle of wine was ordered out, and there and then, without moving from the place, Mr. Blades read the whole historical portion of the book to his willing listener, who frequently interposed criticisms and suggestions of the most useful kind." This friendship continued uninterruptedly for a quarter of a century.

All this time Mr. Blades was producing books and magazine articles—one might almost say rapidly. He wrote twenty books and his various other articles number sixty-three.

As an illustration of his modesty, and at the same time of his dry humour, I have found among his pamphlets a letter from a publisher asking for a few biographical facts to publish in a weekly periodical, entitled the "Biograph." The publisher, in his letter, incidentally remarks "If you should feel inclined to help our paper by sending an order for a couple of hundred copies, I should be obliged." Mr. Blades' reply is as follows: "Dear Sir, I am much obliged to you for your courteous letter, and return the proof you enclosed, corrected. From one or two things therein, especially the wrong Christian name of my father, I gather that your facts come from a late number of "Eminent Men." The Editor of that publication wrote requesting me to furnish him with data for his proposed biography. Soon after, when enclosing proof, he said it was customary for the biographee to take two hundred copies. I at once declined, and sent back the proof unrevised. Now you must please excuse me if I plainly tell you that, however strong my vanity may be, I never have and never will feed it with gold. I did not buy one copy of the number of 'Celebrities' in which I was noticed, and probably shall not buy more than one of the 'Biograph,' so if you like to omit me and thus make room for one more generous in that respect, pray do so and no offence will be taken. Respecting the 'New Monthly' and the photo-portrait I must say the same. If you, as editor, think my 'phiz' worth putting in your magazine, I will sit for it with pleasure. Honestly, I think it will interest nobody but my wife, and will not increase your sale by two."

He was gentle, kind, always ready to give his friends advantage of his shrewd sense and wide knowledge. His family life was one of simple harmony, and when he died, on April 28th, 1890, at the age of sixty-six, the world lost a man whom it was impossible to know and not to honour, to whom no fitter tribute can be found than in the words with which he himself summed up his life of Caxton:—"We can claim for him a character which attracted the love and respect of his associates—a character on which history has chronicled no stain, and which retained to the last its native simplicity and truthfulness."

To turn now to his library, it may be useful to mention first that it contains 2,500 volumes and about 1,250 pamphlets. These are all located in the Institute together with the large collection of printers' portraits he made. It is also interesting to note that several of the book-cases used here were Mr. Blades' as well. Although Blades was *the* great authority on Caxton, and probably saw more examples from our first printer's

press than any man, he did not possess a single "Caxton" himself. Fragments he has to a considerable number, but no complete work. As may be expected, the majority of the books are on the history of the typographic art, and are in many languages, from Latin to Norse. To a certain extent he purchased works from representative presses, but not very largely. A collection of books illustrating the history of printing by the types they are printed in has lately been secured by the governors, and with the "William Blades" Library, supplemented by the more modern books in the "Passmore Edwards" Library the governors of the St. Bride Foundation Institute are proud of the fact that, stored in the Institute, is the finest and most complete collection of works on printing and the allied arts in Europe.

Of his collection of pamphlets there seems to be a general ignorance among those who should know, as to what it really consists of. The prevailing idea is, I believe, that it is composed only of title pages, hand bills, magazine articles, and the like. While acknowledging that there is a fair number of these, each valuable in its own way, I should like it to be known that by far the greater portion are what most people would call "books." For instance, among them is Dickson's book "Who was Scotland's First Printer" and R. H. Blades' "Who was Caxton," and these are by no means the largest the collection contains.

All the great works on typographical history are to be found on the shelves. Among the most important being Atkyns' rare tract on the "Original of Printing" with the frontispiece, 1664. Moxon's "Mechanick Exercises" in the original wrappers as issued in Charles II.'s time. Ames, Herbert, and Dibdin, of course. Rowe More's rare book on typefounding, Timperley, Hansard, and Gresswell, Palmer and Jackson, Lewis's scarce "Life of Mayster William Caxton." Bigmore and Wyman's "Bibliography of Printing," two copies, and in fact, as Blades himself says, every English book in existence on the subject. Using Blades' own language when asked what books he had got, he says: "Typefounders' specimen books reach quite a respectable number, all dated before 1830. Caslon, Figgins, Thorne, Livermore, Stephenson, Fry, Wilson, etc., all represented by their first as well as by their successive issues."

A trade paper, shortly after Blades' death, lamented the absence of files of the trade journals. Speaking from experience I should think Mr. Blades knew something when he decided not to have them. They are very difficult to get and to keep up to date, new ones are always springing into life, running sometimes for a year, but generally failing to eke out a miserable existence for more than six months. This omission, however, has been remedied to a very large extent, and now the Institute

can show as fine a collection of trade periodicals as most places. All the books are substantially—many handsomely—bound, and the lettering on the backs is always particularly distinct and understandable, as Blades was very keen on this point. There are a few fine specimens of early printing from such presses as Ulric Zell, Badius Ascensius, Elzevir, Bodoni, Wynken de Worde, and Benjamin Franklin. Among the curiosities may be mentioned a "Breeches" Bible, 1616, a chained copy of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," printed by Daye in 1576; several microscopic editions of famous books, three or four manuscript "Books of Hours" on vellum, dating from the fifteenth century, and a first edition of "Paradise Lost."

Mr. Blades was always to be seen at his best among his books. He had all the enthusiasm of the young bibliophile, joined to the knowledge and experience of the old bibliographer. He compiled a catalogue of the collection with much carefulness as well as an alphabetical index to the pamphlets. So far as I can make out Blades did not study classification much in the arrangement of his books. To a certain extent he placed them on the shelves according to size, and for the rest trusted to his memory, which, to judge from the accounts of personal acquaintances, never failed him. He had an interleaved copy of the "Bibliography of Printing" in which he regularly and methodically entered every fresh observation. I regret to say that this has not been continued, although the catalogue of our Passmore Edwards collection would make a good supplementary volume, containing as it does all the later works on the art of printing.

Most of you probably are aware that Blades had a very large and complete collection of printers' medals. These were valued, I believe, at £300, were not thought of sufficient educational value to justify their purchase for the Institute. Mr. Charles Welch, of the Guildhall, told me some time ago that he purchased a number of them for the Guildhall Museum, but what became of the remainder I have no knowledge.

The library contains a complete set of Mr. Blades' own works and most of his contributions to the periodical press. There are also a number of note-books, manuscripts, and memoranda written by Blades, which are the outcome of his researches into the life and typography of Caxton, and among them may be mentioned: a list of Caxton's printed books, experimental sheets to show the wear of types cast in lead, together with tracings and translations of portions of Caxton's books. These note-books, containing as they do much valuable and reliable matter, will doubtless ease the path in no small degree of the future historian of the art. When that genius is born, he will have to dig for facts in this Institute, and it is here he

will find all the materials ready to hand from which he may compile that many-times-attempted, but never completed, "History of the Art of Printing." This thought is a very flattering one to us who assist in the administration of the libraries, and gives us fresh zeal and enthusiasm to go on with the work of gathering together anything and everything that may aid that one, whoever he may be, in his noble task.

In concluding this paper, I would like to remind you that some time ago, through the good services of Mr. Drummond, I was able to secure for the members of the Library Assistants' Association the privilege of using these libraries whenever they had need. So far, I regret to say, no one has taken advantage of that privilege, although surely there must be some among you who would like to refer to some bibliography, examine some example of the work of an early press, or satisfy himself on some historical point. Please don't stop away any longer, the books are here for use, and any information or assistance we can afford we shall be happy to give.

THE L.A.A. 1901 PRIZE ESSAY SCHEME.

The "L.A.A. Cotgreave 1900 Prize" of £1 1s. is the second of five annual prizes offered by Mr. A. Cotgreave, of West Ham, for the best essay, not exceeding 1,000 words, on a practical subject connected with librarianship. Open to senior assistants only.

The subject for 1901 will be "How to Popularise a Public Library."

The "L.A.A. Junior 1901 Prize" of £1 is the second of five annual prizes offered by an anonymous donor for the best essay, not exceeding 750 words, open only to assistants under eighteen years of age.

The subject for 1901 will be "The Proper Treatment and Care of Books by the library staff and by the public."

All essays shall be written (preferably type-written), on foolscap paper, and shall be sent to the Hon. Secretary, L.A.A., Public Library, Kingsland Road, N.E., not later than April 2nd, 1901, signed with a distinguishing name or mark, and accompanied by a sealed envelope bearing outside such name or mark, and having inside the real name and address of the competitor.

READING CIRCLE.

There is a proposal now before the Committee of the L.A.A. to establish a Reading Circle and Correspondence Class with a view to utilise the journal as a means of uniting those numerous members of the L.A.A. who are so situated that they cannot readily attend meetings, in closer bonds of professional

interest, and also for contributing towards their professional education. The Hon. Secretary will be very glad to receive suggestions towards this scheme for the consideration of the Committee, and also the names of all who are willing to join. A vigorous response is desired.

NOTES AND NEWS.

BOW.—Mr. J. Passmore Edwards has given £4,000 towards the cost of the new library in Roman Road, and he laid the foundation-stone on October 19th, after performing a similar act at Limehouse.

CARLISLE.—The City Council have decided to purchase some adjacent property to allow of the expansion of the Public Library, Museum, and Schools of Science and Art, at a cost of £7,500. The Reference Library is the recipient of a bequest of books from the late Chancellor Ferguson.

GOVAN.—Mrs. Elder, who presented Elder Park to the borough in memory of her late husband, has just given £25,000 for a free library, on condition that the cost of the building and books does not exceed £7,000, the remainder to be capitalised for the maintenance of the institution. The library is not to be incorporated with any other institution, and during the donor's life the bye-laws must be submitted for her approval. The building will be erected in the south-east corner of the park.

HAWICK.—The Corporation has received an offer of £10,000 for a new public library from Mr. Andrew Carnegie, on condition that they grant a site for the same.

KIMBERLEY.—In October last, in addition to presenting a large parcel of books and magazines for use in the camp, the Committee of the Public Library extended the privilege of first-class subscribers, without fee or deposit, to Colonel Kekewich and all the officers of Her Majesty's forces stationed here. Continuous use has been made of the library by the military stationed in the town. Mr. Bertram L. Dyer, the gentleman selected in London by Mr. Justice Laurence for the post of librarian at the Kimberley Public Library, arrived in Kimberley a week ago, and has commenced his duties this week. Mr. Dyer ought to be an expert in library management, as he has had already thirteen years' experience of the work in connection with the Kensington Public Library. He holds many certificates in literature, history, etc., and the London University Matriculation. Mr. Dyer was for two years Hon. Secretary of the Library Assistants' Association, and first editor of a monthly journal, "The Library Assistant." The phenomenal growth which has taken place in the Kimberley Public Library under the Judge President's fostering care has rendered it important

that the librarian should have an extensive knowledge of library methods, as well as a good literary training, and we feel sure Mr. Dyer will prove to be a very satisfactory selection.—“Diamond Fields Advertiser,” September 8th, 1900.

LEIGH.—The Public Library and Technical School are to be enlarged.

LIMEHOUSE.—The laying of the foundation-stone, prematurely announced in our last issue, was postponed until 19th October, when Mr. Passmore Edwards performed the ceremony.

PRETORIA.—The Government Library is now open daily from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m. Special terms of subscription for short periods are granted to Her Majesty's forces. The official announcement adds: “The library contains a large number of English books of fiction.”

MARRIAGES.

There have recently been two events of special interest to members of the L.A.A.—being the union of Miss E. A. Longfield and Mr. F. Meaden Roberts, Librarian of St. George-in-the-East, and formerly Hon. Secretary of the L.A.A.; and that of Miss B. M. Lodge and Mr. T. Frederick Hogg, of Battersea Public Library, and recently Hon. Secretary of the Branches Sub-Committee of the L.A.A., and the best wishes of the members of the L.A.A. will follow them in their new undertaking.

NEW MEMBERS.

SENIOR.—Messrs. Richard Ineson, Dixon Sharphouse (*Leeds*), and A. E. Hatton (*Leyton*).

JUNIOR.—Messrs. M. Clark, H. W. Dodd, A. C. S. Maule (*Hornsey*), Leonard Hirst (*Kensington*), G. E. Denne (*Richmond*), and F. Tyler (*St. Bride Foundation*).

APPOINTMENT.

BAKER, Mr. A. E., Sub-Librarian, Ashton-under-Lyne, to be Sub-Librarian, Chester. Mr. Baker is a member of the L.A.A. Committee, and the N.W. Branch Committee.

NOTICES.

All communications relating to the Journal should be addressed to Mr. Henry Ogle, *Hon. Editor*, 60, Constantine Road, N.W.

Annual Subscriptions to the L.A.A. are now due, and should be sent to Mr. W. G. Chambers, *Hon. Treasurer*, Public Library, Stoke Newington, N.

All other communications relating to the Association should be addressed to Mr. J. W. Brown, *Hon. Secretary*, L.A.A., Public Library, Kingsland Road, N.E.



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Printed by R. TOMSETT, at 21 Ilbert Street, Queen's Park, W., and Published for
the Library Assistants' Association, November 5th, 1900.

